

REMARKS

The Office action mailed on December 5, 2006, has been carefully reviewed.

The objections to the drawings are obviated by appropriate amendment. Corrected drawings sheets are attached. Figure 2D has been deleted. Reference numerals 115 and 101 have been inserted in FIG. 1. Reference numerals 101A and 112S in FIG. 3D have been changed to 110A and 110S, respectively. Reference numerals 533B, 533S, and 531 have been inserted in FIG. 5. In FIG. 8B, reference numeral 850B has been deleted, and reference numeral 850B has been changed to 850, and the point of origin of reference numeral 850 is now correctly shown. In FIG. 8C, reference numeral 861 has been changed to 861T, and reference numeral 861T has been changed to 831T. No new matter has been added.

Accordingly, favourable reconsideration of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

The objection to the specification is obviated by appropriate amendment.

Accordingly, favourable reconsideration of the objection to the specification is respectfully requested.

Claims 23, 24, 31-33, 37, 38, 41, and 42, were objected to.

Claims 31-33, 37, 38, 41, and 42 have been cancelled.

Furthermore, in claims 23 and 24, the term "of said drive coupling" has been changed to "from said force transmitting part or parts", and "said parts" has been changed to "said extension parts".

Accordingly, favourable reconsideration of the objection to claims 23 and 24 is respectfully requested.

The rejection of claims 22-25 and 40-42 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, is obviated by appropriate amendment.

Claims 40-42 have been cancelled.

Furthermore, in claim 22, the term "means for release of the coupling between the force transmitting part or parts of the actuator and the piston assembly" has been deleted.

Accordingly, favourable reconsideration of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, is respectfully requested.

The rejection of claims 22, 24-32, 34-40, and 42 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) is traversed in part and obviated in part by appropriate amendment.

Claims 26-42 have been cancelled.

The Kirchhofer reference does not disclose or suggest the invention of claims 22-25.

Kirchhofer discloses an applicator body (2, 3), a piston (K) with a piston rod which projects from its rear (column 5,

line 51) and a force applying actuator (10) which provides a coupling with the piston assembly to displace the piston assembly within the cartridge (B) to discharge the contents of the cartridge.

The Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's interpretation of part (20) of Kirchhofer as a piston rod. Part 20 is referred to in col. 6, lines 30 and 38, as a transfer member. This member serves to transfer force between the actuator (10) and the cartridge (B).

The piston rod, which has no reference numeral in Kirchhofer, extends from the piston K and lies inside this cylindrical transfer member (20) and is unaffected by same. The force transmitting part of the actuator (10) is the plunger (11) at the forward end of the actuator (10), as once the plunger is released from the transfer member (20) it pushes directly against the piston rod (column 6, lines 20 to 22).

There is no mention or suggestion in Kirchhofer, however, that the piston (K) is itself deformable, and there is no equivalent in Kirchhofer of the presently recited triggering means which is movable by the piston (111, 511) when the piston is deformed into the end of the cartridge and which serves to release coupling between the force transmitting

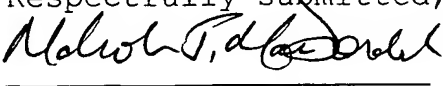
part (132, 532) of the actuator and the piston rod to bring about needle retraction.

The parts of Kirchhofer which the Examiner has mentioned, namely the washer (21) and the shoulder (22), serve to release coupling between the actuator (10) and the drive transfer means (20) for driving forward the cartridge B, not for a subsequent release of drive coupling with the piston rod.

Clearly, the applicator of the present invention does not require a drive coupling to advance the cartridge (110 in the present Figs. 1 to 5, B in Kirchhofer).

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the Kirchhofer reference does not disclose or suggest each and every element of the claimed invention. Accordingly, the Applicant urges favourable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(b).

Accordingly, it is believed that this application is now in condition for allowance. If any final points remain that can be clarified by telephone, Examiner Mehta is respectfully encouraged to contact Applicant's attorney at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,  
By:   
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